

COLUMBIA RIVER REGIONAL FORUM

TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM

July 5 and July 9, 2007 Conference Calls

FACILITATOR'S SUMMARY NOTES ON FUTURE ACTIONS

Facilitator: Robin Harkless

Notes: Erin Halton

The following notes are a summary of issues that are intended to point out future actions or issues that may need further discussion at upcoming meetings. These notes are not intended to be the “record” of the meeting, only a reminder for TMT members.

Summer Transportation at McNary

Bernard Klatte, COE, gave TMT members a quick review of the McNary transport issue: During the June 27 TMT meeting, the Corps reported that the passage conditions at McNary Dam were no longer spring-like, and transportation operations should begin per the 2004 BiOp/UPA. On behalf of the salmon managers, NOAA proposed delaying implementation of transportation at McNary until information was reviewed from the NMFS Science Center's 2002 study results comparing transported and in-river fish at McNary. At the July 5 TMT meeting, having reviewed the science, the salmon managers stated that they did not object to beginning transportation operations at McNary. However, the Corps identified a navigation safety issue concerning the fish transport barges, given installation of TSW's and associated research and testing requiring spill at the project. The Corps proposed a navigation safety test on July 6.

The COE's plan, per guidance in the Fish Operations Plan and consistent with the 2004 BiOp, was to reduce spill to 26 kcfs on July 6 and, if the fish barge captain and project biologists determined conditions were safe enough to navigate, begin collection and start transporting on Sunday, July 8. The COE asked TMT members to weigh in on the issue:

- NOAA: Begin collection while maintaining TSW and research operations, and ensure all operations are consistent with the 2004 BiOp.
- USFWS: No objection; conclusions about the benefits of transportation at McNary may be premature at this point and further study is needed.
- OR: Do not object to NOAA's recommendation, as the operation is consistent with the 2004 BiOp, and more research is needed on the impacts of transportation on fish.
- ID: No objection to the proposed operation.
- MT: No objection to the proposed operation.
- Nez Perce: No objection to the proposed operation.
- CRITFC: The research is not conclusive enough to fully support going to collection. Defer to NOAA to make a recommendation.
- BOR: No objection to the proposed operation.
- BPA: No objection to the proposed operation.

Action/Next Steps: The email sent out by Cindy Henriksen, COE on 7/3 summarized the action the COE would take regarding transport at McNary:

"The fish barge captain has agreed to look at the required spill w/ bays 14/20/22 open (total 26 kcfs) this Friday morning to determine if tailrace conditions are safe for navigation. If they determine that it is safe then we will start collecting fish later that day and the first barge to transport from MCN will be on Sunday, 8 July. If the spill is not safe for navigation, we will leave the configuration in bypass mode and update TMT [via email]."

Update from 7/9 TMT Conference Call: Bernard Klatte reported on Friday's July 6 test: following this test, the Corps determined that it was too dangerous to operate a fish barge with the 3 spill bays open, and decided to continue bypassing fish rather than begin transport operations. TMT members indicated they would not object to this operation given the navigation safety issue under these spill conditions. Bernard noted that the signatories to the 2007 Agreement were contacted and their representative indicated there were no objections to this change in operations. It was noted that truck transportation at McNary was slated to begin on August 16.

Dworshak Operations

TMT members looked at current conditions in the Snake Basin. Air temperatures were above 100° and expected to increase over the weekend. Water temperatures into Lower Granite were around 18° C and Dworshak releases were maintaining at 43-44° C. TMT members also looked at updated CEQUAL modeling results provided by Mike Schneider, COE. A concern was raised by one TMT member that the modeling may have been too optimistic in terms of its projections, and it was also noted that travel time of the cool water from Dworshak will take approximately 5 days to reach Lower Granite given the low flows. Folks were asked to consider the option of dropping temperatures at Dworshak for a few days rather than increasing outflows, to which the USFWS reiterated that the federal hatchery would not support dropping below 43-44° at any time. Two other options were discussed: increase outflows to 14 kcfs for three days and revisit the operation with the intent to drop outflows at that time, or, increase to 12 kcfs and check in with TMT next week to determine next steps.

Action/Next Steps: Given there was not a full consensus to implement to 14 kcfs for three days, NOAA recommended operating Dworshak to 12 kcfs and checking in during an FPAC conference call on Monday to look at updated conditions and forecasts. The COE planned to shift Dworshak outflows to 12 kcfs ASAP, and the Salmon Managers held a conference call on Monday, 7/9 at 11 a.m.

Update from 7/9 TMT Conference Call: Paul Wagner, NOAA, shared the results of the FPAC call held just before the TMT call, during which the salmon managers reviewed updated modeling and conditions, and based on this information, agreed to recommend maintaining 12 kcfs through Friday, July 13 and reducing to full powerhouse (9.5 kcfs) on Saturday morning, with a check in on Wednesday during a regularly scheduled TMT meeting. This, they believed, would strike a balance between maintaining acceptable temperatures now and through the summer and reaching close to 1535' at Dworshak on

August 31. All agreed that the operation thus far had been successful and that there was a need to continue monitoring this operation closely throughout the summer. The COE planned to continue operating Dworshak at 12 kcfs outflows, and there will be further discussion at the July TMT meeting.

Next face-to-face TMT meeting: Wednesday, July 11th

Agenda items will include:

- Review/Finalize Facilitator's Notes and Meeting Minutes
- Priest Rapids Operations Report
- Updated Flow Forecasts
- Dworshak Operations
- Libby/Hungry Horse Operations
- Summer 2007 Treaty Fishing
- BPA Power Emergency Protocols
- Flow Augmentation in Upper Snake
- Operations Review

**Columbia River Regional Forum
Technical Management Team Conference Call
July 9, 2007**

1. Welcome and Introductions

Today's TMT conference call was chaired by Cathy Hlebechuk and facilitated by Robin Harkless, with representatives from the Nez Perce Tribe, BOR, COE, Washington state, NOAA, BPA, CRITFC, USFWS and Montana on the line. The following is a summary (not a verbatim transcript) of the topics discussed and decisions made during the call. Anyone with questions or comments about these notes should provide them to the TMT chair or bring them to the next meeting.

2. Dworshak Operations

The main purpose of today's conference call was to check in on Dworshak operations in light of an FPAC call earlier today to review updated conditions and CEQUAL modeling results.

Mike Schneider (COE) presented FPAC with verbal findings based on two modeled scenarios of Dworshak outflows, one a flow of full powerhouse at 9.5 kcfs, the other maintaining the current 12 kcfs discharge, Paul Wagner reported. While graphs were not yet available, Schneider's review indicated that the 12 kcfs level would provide a greater margin of safety than 9.5 kcfs outflows, which might or might not be sufficient to keep river temperatures within half a degree of the 20 degrees C criterion with a forecasted heat wave coming.

Given these findings, FPAC recommended maintaining 12 kcfs outflows until this Friday, July 13, pending future modeling results – after which FPAC might recommend a decrease in flows to powerhouse capacity late Friday night, Wagner said. FPAC also favored maintaining the current water temperature of about 43.5 degrees F, which works for the federal hatchery because the fish are getting exposure to another degree of warmth while still inside the hatchery. Wagner predicted that Friday's forecast of 110 degrees at Lewiston, Idaho, will be the peak of this summer's heat on the Snake, but advised that a decision about the weekend operation be held off until the regularly scheduled TMT meeting on July 11.

If we continue to release about 12 kcfs through Friday, that will not jeopardize the ability to release at least 10 kcfs through the end of August and still achieve the target elevation, according to the EPA RBM-10 modeling Kyle Dittmer showed TMT, Dave Statler (Nez Perce) said. If we keep outflows at 12 kcfs for much longer, we'll begin to reduce the potential for heat control later in August, Wagner said. The margin of water volume above full powerhouse is shrinking rapidly, if not gone by Friday, Wagner and Schneider agreed.

Hlebechuk reminded everyone a decision has to be made on how to shape the water releases and to keep in mind if more water is released now there will be less available later.

Wagner asked, what about the increase above 20 degrees C that happens on July 26 according to the CEQUAL modeling? That goes back to the occurrence of a second heat wave last July, which might not happen again this year, Schneider said. The consequence of having no more water above powerhouse capacity later in the month is warmer temperatures.

Historically, we have at least one or two heat spikes in the lower Snake during mid-July to mid-August, Kyle Dittmer (CRITFC) said. More hot spells can reasonably be expected, but that doesn't necessarily imply a need to run at full powerhouse capacity throughout the remainder of August. Dittmer recalled that outflows have been cut to below 7 kcfs some years, in order to conserve water for later in the season. Wagner agreed that prior years' temperature control efforts during mid-August have been effective.

This year, it will be important to remember the five-day lag time in terms of measuring effects downriver. In a day or two, we should see another decline in temperatures in conjunction with raising Dworshak to 12 kcfs outflows, Schneider said. Henriksen reminded TMT that people in the Lewiston area might need increased flows to meet their power needs during extremely hot spells.

TMT suspended decision-making about this weekend's operation until the regularly scheduled TMT meeting on Wednesday, when Mike Schneider will present the latest CEQUAL modeling results. We've only got a few more days of ability to spill above power house capacity, which means we may have less than

10 kcfs on average to work with through July and August, Statler said. He urged people to think about using these flows judiciously.

The modeling and information to date indicate that, while flows of 10 kcfs will likely keep river temperatures below the critical level, there's interest and agreement among the salmon managers to provide an extra cushion, recognizing all the things that need to be balanced, Robin Harkless said and Haller agreed. The planned operation is to continue at 12 kcfs outflows, then look at the latest modeling on Wednesday to confirm the tentative plan of reducing flows to full powerhouse beginning Saturday morning, July 14.

The COE needs to shut off spill at Dworshak spillway for about two minutes to do emergency management, Laura Hamilton (COE) said – today if possible. There were no objections to this request.

3. McNary Transportation Update

Bernard Klatte (COE) reported on the spillway navigation safety test at McNary that was discussed at the July 5 TMT meeting. TMT's recommendation at that meeting was to start transport, but it was not clear that the barge operators could navigate safely with spill in progress. Because the two RSWs in McNary spill bays 20 and 22 would require a minimum of 4 hours' spill stoppage to be closed, and are spilling 26 kcfs combined, the barge captain attempted to navigate the spillway with spill still in progress. The tow boat traversed the spilling basin and encountered turbulent flows that led the captain to decide it was unsafe to proceed with barge transportation this year, given that it's not feasible to stop spill. Klatte sent out an email on Friday to this effect, and NOAA and COE are working on proper legal documentation of this in relation to the 2004 BiOp. As noted in the BiOp, Aug. 16 is the tentative start of truck transportation at McNary, Klatte said. Paul Wagner has been working with NOAA's legal staff on how to document this situation for the court. With research underway and expectations high, this would be a terrible time to shut off spill at McNary for more than 4 hours. The ability to shut off spill briefly will definitely be included in future discussions of surface bypass options, Klatte said.

4. Next Meetings

The next regularly scheduled TMT meeting will be face to face on Wednesday, July 11. Agenda items will include a final report on Priest Rapids operations this year, updated flow forecasts, Dworshak operations, a Libby and Hungry Horse update, the summer treaty fisheries, BPA power emergency protocol, the "427 cap" (WHAT IS THIS?), and the usual operations review. This meeting summary was prepared by consultant and writer Pat Vivian.

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